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Subject: "CANNY BUYING" Information from the Office of Marketing Administration,
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Most homemakers know how to read. Yet, if you hand 3 women a can of peas that are not opened, and ask each one to describe the contents of the can by reading the label, you're likely to get 3 different answers. Test yourself the next time you shop for groceries and find out how you interpret the information on a can of fruit or vegetables. Here are a few pointers.

On many cans of fruit and vegetables you'll now find the term Grade A....or Grade B....or Grade C. For example, when you buy a can of peas labeled Grade A, you can depend on getting top quality peas. The best quality in canned peas refers to immature, tender peas that are uniformly green....peas that are relatively free from defects and are packed in a clear liquid.

If the can is labeled Grade B, the peas are not as perfect as those in Grade A can but still very good. And logically, peas labeled Grade C lack the perfection in quality that you find in the two higher grades. However, Grade C peas are just as wholesome and full of food value as peas labeled Grade A or Grade B and should cost less.

The terms, Grade A, B and C are suggested by the Department of Agriculture because they are easily understood. Instead of using these terms, a packer may choose to label his canned goods Fancy, Cnoice, Extra standard or Standard. On some cans you'll find both terms, such as Fancy and Grade.

The system of grading with the terms A, B and C grew out of the need for a uniform yarastick to measure the quality of canned food. Packers asked for the standardization, wholesalers wanted it, and consumers needed it, too. The result

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was that the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the processors and other interested groups, developed standards for 85 different products to use in grading canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables.

These standards usually provide for 3 grades....A, B and C. So....when you see Grades A, B or C on a can, you can translate the meaning immediately into 3 levels of quality.

With thousands of different names and labels on canned food shelves, shopping is no easy matter. If you find words or sentences that describe a product and in addition a Grade A, B or C to tell quality....then you have just so much more information that will help you select foods wisely.

Supplementary information that would be helpful might include the number of pieces, if you were buying peach halves, for example....and it might mention the size of the vegetable, such as no. 1, or tiny size, peas. Sometimes the label tells you how the vegetable is cut. For instance, green beans may be cut French style or shoestring and beets may be quartered.

All this information is convenient to know....in addition to the quality of the fruit or vegetable. You learn how to shop for quality, by looking and asking for the grade you want....Grade A or B or C....That's a reliable standard, easy to remember and easy to read quickly.

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